

A veteran with an insurance policy which covers any portion of the cost for emergency treatment would be burdened with the remaining amount not covered by insurance. This unfair policy has caused many veterans undue stress and has placed them in unnecessary financial hardship. H.R. 1377, as amended, eliminates this inequity by requiring the VA to pay for emergency care in a non-VA facility, even if the veteran holds a policy that will pay for any portion of their care.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank Ranking Member BUYER and the Health Subcommittee chairman, Mr. MICHAUD, for their contributions to this bill as well as the staff.

I urge your support in passing H.R. 1377, as amended.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1377, as amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand VA's authority to reimburse veterans for the cost of emergency care provided in a non-department facility. I want to thank the chairman for introducing this bill, which would provide financial protections for veterans in need of emergency care.

Current law allows VA to reimburse a veteran for emergency treatment obtained in a non-VA facility only if the veteran does not have any other entitlement to pay from a private party. As a result, a veteran with a policy that covers only a small part of the emergency care costs could be personally liable for substantial out-of-pocket expenses.

H.R. 1377, as amended, would change current law to authorize VA to cover additional expenses in cases where a veteran receives only partial payment from a third party. However, the legislation does make it clear that VA would be the secondary payer and that payment would be limited to the difference between the amount paid by the private insurance and the VA authorized rate. It also ensures that VA payment fully absolves a veteran from any liability to that provider.

In addition to providing prospective protection for veterans, H.R. 1377 was amended to allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to retroactively apply this law on a discretionary basis for a veteran who may have incurred a medical debt for emergency treatment prior to the date of enactment.

Madam Speaker, the chairman has talked about the need for this discretionary authority. As such, Ranking Member BUYER requested during our markup last week that the bill report make it clear that it is the committee's intention for the Secretary to use this authority and take into consideration the facts and circumstances of each veteran's situation. A veteran should not be discouraged from seeking emergency care at the closest commu-

nity hospital for fear of financial uncertainty.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. HALVORSON. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida, Congresswoman BROWN-WAITE.

Mrs. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today in support of H.R. 1377, a commonsense bill to reimburse veterans for emergency treatment in non-VA facilities. Our first Commander in Chief, George Washington, once said that the willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, will be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country. Taking care of those who have sacrificed for our Nation is truly our sacred duty. It is a national promise that goes back to Presidents Washington and Lincoln. Yet a couple of weeks ago, President Obama proposed billing veterans for treatment of combat-related injuries. Although the President announced that he was rescinding this proposal, it is nonetheless alarming to our veteran population.

The courageous Americans who have served our country should know that all of us recognize their sacrifice, and this bill by Representative FILNER will go a long way in doing just that.

Back in Florida, I represent over 110,000 veterans, the second highest number of any Member of Congress. Many of these brave men and women are disabled either in battle or in the course of their service to the United States military. Yet, veterans in my district must frequently travel long distances to obtain care from a VA facility. As a result, those requiring emergency care must seek treatment in a private or a community-run hospital. Passage of this bill will ensure that veterans are not saddled with massive emergency room bills.

I thank my colleague, Mr. FILNER, for introducing H.R. 1377. And I would hope that all Members of this body can support such a worthy message of support for our veterans.

Mrs. HALVORSON. I continue to reserve the balance of my time, Madam Speaker.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Subcommittee on Health chairman, MIKE MICHAUD, and Ranking Member HENRY BROWN for their hard work on this legislation and Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for moving this bill so quickly through the committee process.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1377, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I also want to thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for working so hard together to make sure that these wonderful Veterans Affairs issues come before the body. No matter what rumor has ever come up that might come from the administration, the Veterans Committee has always made sure that the veterans are first and foremost in all of our minds.

I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 1377, as amended.

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1377, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1430

#### VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2009

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1513) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2009, the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1513

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009".

#### SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—Effective on December 1, 2009, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2009, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—

(1) PERCENTAGE.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2009, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(2) ROUNDING.—Each dollar amount increased under paragraph (1), if not a whole dollar amount, shall be rounded to the next lower whole dollar amount.

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

### SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in section 2(b), as increased under that section, not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2010.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of passage of the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009, H.R. 1513, which was introduced by one of the newer members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and sure to be one of our body's most dynamic Members, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK from Arizona. And I thank you for your leadership on the bill.

I also want to thank the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Mr. BUYER, who has been supportive of this noncontroversial bill and helped with its unanimous passage from our committee to allow consideration by the full House. The fact that we were able to get this bill to the floor within nearly a month of its introduction shows the House leadership's commitment to our Nation's veterans, their families, and their survivors.

Like it has done since 1976, Congress, through the passage of this measure, would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the rates of basic

compensation for disabled veterans and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation, the DIC, to their survivors and dependents, along with other benefits in order to keep pace with the rising cost of living.

The disability COLA would become effective December 1, 2009, and will be equal to that provided on an annual basis to Social Security recipients. Last year, the COLA was set at 5.8 percent, an increase direly needed, as the financial crush of the recession from the previous administration closed in on many of our disabled veterans' households.

Madam Speaker, this bill will benefit each disabled veteran and their survivors from the World War I era through the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many of the nearly 3 million veterans who receive these benefits depend upon these tax-free payments, not only to provide for their own basic needs, but for those of their spouses, children and parents as well. Without an annual COLA increase, these veterans and their families would see the value of their hard-earned benefits slowly erode. We would be derelict in our duty if we failed to guarantee that those who sacrifice so much for our country receive benefits and services that keep pace with their needs.

We fund the war. Let's fund the warrior and his family and survivors by ensuring that their benefits keep pace with their living expenses. Let's ensure that their benefits make ends meet at the end of the month.

Madam Speaker, as we approach our country's 141st Memorial Day commemoration, I ask my colleagues to support this bill and send a clear message to support our troops. "You will be taken care of when you return. We will not forget your sacrifice."

Just like our military men and women did not hesitate to offer to lay down their lives to defend our freedom and the way of life that we cherish, we will not hesitate to defend the funds they need to support themselves and their families.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009, H.R. 1513, without delay. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1513.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1513, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009.

I would like to thank my colleagues, Mr. HALL of New York and chairman of the Disabilities Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, and Mr. LAMBORN of Colorado, the ranking member of the subcommittee, as well as the bill's sponsor, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona, for their leadership on this bill.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1513 would increase, effective as of December 1, 2009, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities, and the rates of dependents and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. The COLA adjustments include veterans disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, clothing allowance, and dependents and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.

Madam Speaker, this is an important annual authorization which provides much-needed assistance to our Nation's veterans, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I recognize Congresswoman BROWN-WAITE for as much time as she may consume.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1513, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009. Previously, I served on the Veterans' Committee for 6 years, and I'm very glad to see Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER doing this fine work this year, as they did in the 2 years that I was on the last time.

While all veterans made sacrifices for our Nation, those men and women who were disabled during their service must receive proper benefits in order to meet their care. Disabled veterans have given their blood, sweat and tears on battlefields from Germany to Japan, from Korea to Vietnam, from Iraq to Afghanistan.

In this time of economic turmoil, it is vital that Congress preserve the cost-of-living adjustment to help disabled veterans. Indeed, with rising prices and falling home values, it's more important than ever that the needs of veterans be adequately funded.

The cost-of-living adjustment means that veterans will be better armed with the resources that they need to survive in our communities.

As President Lincoln said in his second inaugural address, government's obligation is, and I quote, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan." It is our sacred obligation to care for those injured while in the service.

I thank my colleague from Arizona for introducing this bill. And I urge all of my colleagues to support its passage.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Again, I'd like to thank Chairman FILNER, Ranking Member BUYER, Subcommittee Chairman HALL and ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. LAMBORN, for their leadership in bringing this much-needed legislation to the

floor. And I urge my colleagues to support it.

And I'd like to thank the gentlelady from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON) for her help today. This is a great piece of legislation, and I urge tonight we vote unanimously for this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1513.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I too want to thank my fellow freshman colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) for his help today, as well as Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for the wonderful work we've been able to do this year.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 1513.

Ms. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I thank the Speaker for allowing me the opportunity to address the bill I sponsored—H.R. 1513, "The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009."

Many of my constituents in Greater Arizona are hurting, and the Nation's economy, while showing some signs of improvements, still has a long road to a full recovery.

No one feels this pressure or deserves the support of a grateful Nation more than our disabled Veterans.

Our Nation's veterans have made costly sacrifices to ensure the safety of America's families. For that reason, our country provides both compensation payments to service-disabled Veterans and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits to the survivors of servicemembers who die in service to our Nation.

However, without this bill, these payments would not keep up with rising prices for everyday items like gas and groceries.

That's why, on behalf of the over 3 million veterans nationally—including 65,000 in my home state of Arizona—who are currently receiving disability compensation, I am asking you to join me in support of this bill.

This bill keeps the promise to our Nation's veterans to honor the sacrifice that these brave men and women have endured while serving our country in uniform.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1513.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### HONORING PAUL HARVEY

Mr. LYNCH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 223) Honoring the life, achievements, and contributions of Paul Harvey, affectionately known for his signature line, "This is Paul Harvey . . . Good Day," as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 223

Whereas Paul Harvey, a son, brother, husband, father, friend, pioneering American, and a cherished voice, passed away on February 28, 2009;

Whereas Paul Harvey Aurandt was born on September 4, 1918, in Tulsa, Oklahoma;

Whereas prefacing a storied career in radio by making radio receivers as a young boy and a fill-in announcer while a student at the University of Tulsa, he epitomized American values and American ideals proving that one can lead a decent life with hard work and solid values;

Whereas Paul Harvey, through open expression, pioneered the format of radio broadcasts that so many now find commonplace;

Whereas Paul Harvey was a blogger before it was a known medium, he just did his blogging on the radio;

Whereas Paul Harvey was elected to the National Association of Broadcasters Radio Hall of Fame and Oklahoma Hall of Fame and appeared on the Gallup poll list of America's most admired men;

Whereas in 2005, Paul Harvey was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' most prestigious civilian award, by President George W. Bush;

Whereas Paul Harvey's career in radio spanned over 70 years and he is considered one of the United States' most accomplished radio personalities and a trail blazer;

Whereas Paul Harvey was beloved by his family, friends, neighbors, and vast listening audience for his great generosity, good humor, and spirited charm;

Whereas Paul Harvey, the "largest one-man network in the world", was heard on 1,200 radio stations, 400 Armed Forces Network stations around the world, and in 300 newspapers; and

Whereas Paul Harvey's broadcasts and newspaper columns have been reprinted in the Congressional Record more than those of any other commentator: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives honors the life and accomplishments of Paul Harvey.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, it is with profound honor that I rise in support of House Resolution 223, which celebrates the life of legendary radio and television personality, Paul Harvey.

I'd first like to thank my colleague from Oklahoma, Congressman JOHN SULLIVAN, for sponsoring this afternoon's condolence measure, which has amassed over 60 cosponsors here in the Congress since being introduced on March 9, 2009.

I'd also like to thank Chairman TOWNS from Brooklyn and my colleagues on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee for their unanimous support in bringing this resolution to the floor.

We live in an age of unprecedented access to the news. Between the 24-hour cable news networks and the Internet, there's no shortage of sources from which citizens are informed.

Most of us remember a different time when Americans relied on a small number of outlets for each day's events. Before everybody had a blog, we placed our trust in a few individuals to represent the voice of the average citizen. And I am proud to say that Paul Harvey was certainly one of those trusted individuals.

There is no greater testament to Paul Harvey's distinguished career than its longevity. He was no more than a teenager when he first hit the airwaves, reading advertisements and news clips. After studying speech and literature at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Mr. Harvey worked at radio stations across the American heartland.

In 1941, Mr. Harvey sacrificed his personal aspirations in order to defend our country. He was a reporter in Hawaii during the attack on Pearl Harbor, and decided to enlist in the United States Army immediately following.

Upon conclusion of his national service, Paul Harvey set about redefining what it meant to be a radio host by delivering news in his own unique and humble way. Paul Harvey was never afraid of controversy, and he was not one to forfeit his principles. His style was part journalist, part showman and, fortunately for America, part everyman.

As many as 22 million people tuned in daily to hear Mr. Harvey give his take on the day's news. Perhaps it was his plain-spoken ability to connect with and reassure the American people that made him so popular. Consider this remark, which is as relevant today as it was when first spoken. "In times like these, it helps to recall that there have always been times like these."

Paul Harvey was constantly recognized for his achievements, both as a broadcaster and as an outstanding citizen. He received accolades from the State of Oklahoma, the National Association of Broadcasters, the Salvation Army, the United States Air Force, The Humane Society and the American Legion, just to name a few.